

PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

IN MALAYSIA

by

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REFERENCE

NOT TO BE BORROWED.

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INTRODUCTION

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have found that one of the most complex problems confronting them is the attainment of independence created a state for them, were, however, disappointed. Independence created a state for them, served only as the beginning of a new 'struggle' where another has emerged. The attainment of independence created a starting point for the emergence of contradictions and cleavages. Ethnic, religious, regional and other sectional differences begin to emerge as basic issues in post-independence politics. Thereafter, national unity becomes a national aspiration. It was found to be difficult to achieve, and more complicated to maintain. Even in those countries where anti-colonial nationalism has been an important factor for unity e.g. in India, the simple force of nationalism which has been concentrated against the foreign rulers tends to fragment when its chief aim — national independence has been achieved.

The purpose of this essay is to determine the reasons for the underdeveloped state, if not the non-existence of "common loyalties" and the low level of national orientation in Malaysia. In other words, the essay will be concerned with the problems or obstacles that lie in the path of nation-building in Malaysia. This essay shall not attempt to give solutions to the problems, but merely to outline some of the main problems faced by this country in the effort to reach nationhood. The proper scope of the essay is defined in Chapter I.

1. For example, independence struggle led to the formation of the Alliance Party in Malaysia. It was the Alliance Party which obtained independence for Malaya from the British.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

In their task of nation-building, peoples of Asia and Africa have found that one of the most complex problems confronting them is the creation and maintenance of a viable political community and a workable political system. During the colonial era, it was generally believed that independence would create them a nation. Most of them were, however, disappointed. Independence created a state for them, but to achieve nationhood a new 'struggle' was needed. Thus independence served only as the beginning of a new 'struggle' where another has ended. During the independence struggle, varying degrees of unity may be observed¹, the attainment of independence created a starting point for the emergence of contradictions and cleavages. Ethnic, religious, regional and other sectional differences begin to emerge as basic issues in post-independence politics. Thereafter, national unity becomes a national aspiration. It was found to be difficult to achieve, and more complicated to maintain. Even in those countries where anti-colonial nationalism has been an important factor for unity e.g. in India, the simple form of nationalism which has been concentrated against the foreign rulers tends to fragment when its chief ^{aim} ~~aim~~ ---- national independence has been achieved.

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1. L. Binder: "National Integration & Political

Development", American Political Science Review Vol. LVIII, No. 3 (1964)

2. L.W. Pye: "The Politics of South East Asia", The

Politics of Developing Areas, edited by G.A. Almond & J.S. Coleman

3. Myron Weiner: "Political Integration and Political

Development" in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science March 1965. Page 55.

Aspects of National Integration.

CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

National Integration as a function and dimension of political and economic development.

The post-independence problems of new nation ~~are~~ can be generally summarised as problems of development. One aspect of this general problem, is the problem of national unity and the establishment of a viable political system.

Before going any further, it must be borne in mind that national integration, like political and economic development, is not a terminal state of affair. It is an open-ended process which evolves in the process of development. One can depict or account for this process chronologically or historically but to view it as a predictable process heading for some speculative terminal state would not be helpful¹.

One of the main characteristics or one of the main products of the process of development in new nations is social changes. These changes, as Lucian W. Pye says, have introduced new values and practices². Just as different levels of political and economic development have brought in new values and practices, different stages of political and economic development also create different problems of integration. To quote Myron Weiner "As the functions of a system expand - or the political leadership aspires to expand the functions of the system - a new level of integration ~~is~~ required. When we speak of political development, therefore, we are concerned with, first, the expanding functions of the political system, secondly with the new level of integration thereby required to carry out these functions, and finally with the capacity of the political system to cope with these new problems of integration³. In other words, national integration is a function as well as a dimension of political development. New tasks which men set for themselves bring about their own integrative problems.

1. L. Binder: "National Integration & Political Development", American Political Science Review Vol. LVIII. No. 3 (1964)

2. L.W. Pye: "The Politics of South East Asia", The Politics of Developing Areas, edited by G.A. Almond & J.S. Coleman

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five different aspects¹. Firstly, like Coleman and Roseberg, Weiner suggests that integration may refer to the process of bringing together groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national identity.

Aspects of National Integration.

The process of national integration may be affected by external and internal factors. However, it must be stated at the outset that the problem that will be examined at greater length in this essay will, in the main, be internal or national problems only. This is not however, to be taken as an underestimation of the significance of the external factors¹.

In any case, before dwelling further, it is appropriate at this juncture to ask what "national integration" means.

In order to clearly understand what national integration means we must understand what the term "integration" means.

There are many aspects of integration. In its cultural context, we can borrow Ralph Linton's definition i.e. "integration is the feature of mutual adjustment between culture elements"². The process of integration here is the progressive development of more and more perfect adjustment between the various elements which compose the total culture. The degree of integration is the extent to which such adjustments have been perfected at any given point in the culture continuum.

Lastly Weiner uses 'integration' to refer to the minimum value concept. J.S. Coleman and Carl G. Roseberg use integration in two senses: 1. political integration which refers to the progressive bridging of the elite - mass group on the vertical plane in the course of developing an integrated political process and a participant political community; and 2. territorial integration, which refers to the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities or the horizontal plane in the process of creating a homogenous territorial political community³.

Coleman's and Roseberg's concept of integration thus encompass Linton's cultural definition of integration because their second usage of integration refers to the "progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities." This is reminiscent of Linton's "mutual adjustments" concept. Only that while the former speaks more from the political aspect the latter is more of a sociological connotation. Perhaps Myron Weiner is more explicit when he considers the problem from

1. For instance, the Malaysia - Singapore relationship is one of the causes of dissension in the Malaysian Society.

2. R. Linton: "Study of Man." Appleton - century - Crofts N.Y.1963.

3. Quoted from the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science March 1965. Page 53.

five different aspects¹. Firstly, like Coleman and Roseberg, Weiner suggests that integration may refer to the process of bringing together culturally and socially discrepant groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national identity.

(4) Integrative behaviour: integration of individual for
Secondly, also like Coleman and Roseberg, Weiner uses the term 'integration' to refer "to the problem of linking the government and the governed." Implied in this usage is the existence of a 'gap' between the elite and the mass, characterized by marked differences in aspirations and values. Integration here means not so much the elimination of elite - mass distinctions but rather the removal of certain barriers to communication between the two. As Weiner puts it "The integration of elite and mass, between governors and governed, occurs not when differences among the two disappear, but when a pattern of authority and consent is established." In other words there is no alienation of the system. people identified.

Thirdly, Weiner uses the term 'integration' in its territorial concept i.e. it refers "to the objective control which central authority has over the entire territory under its jurisdiction."

Fourthly, Weiner speaks of integrative behaviour which refers to "the capacity of people in a society to organize for some common purpose."

Lastly Weiner uses 'integration' to refer to the minimum value consensers necessary to maintain a social order. In other words the necessity of common values.

Diversified as the definitions maybe, we can, however, trace a common element in all i.e. the common purpose of uniting, or to use Linton's words of 'mutually adjusting' the various elements in the society into a solid integrated whole. In other words "they are all attempts to define what it is which holds a society and a political system together."² We have so far discuss five concepts of 'integration' namely national integration, territorial integration, elite - mass integration and an integrative behaviour. We are, however, here concerned with national integration which Weiner defines as "the problem of creating a sense of territorial nationality which overshadows - or eliminates - subordinate parochial loyalties".³ Perhaps it would not be wrong if it is pointed out that "national integration" as defined above encompass all the other four concepts. Implied in the definition of national integration are:

- (1) Territorial integration.
- (2) Elite - mass integration (the essence of territorial

1. Myron Weiner: "Political Integration and Political Development" in the American Academy of the Political and Social Science March 1965. Page 53 - 55.

2. Myron Weiner: Ibid page 54.

3. Myron Weiner: Ibid page 53.

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integration is control by the rulers).

- (3) Value integration; to eliminate parochial loyalties necessitates value adjustments for the ultimate purpose of value integration.

(4) Integrative behaviour: integration of individual for purposive activities is essential for the "establishment of a national identity." answer is that the colonial regimes which preceded this process of national integration is, again, to quote Weiner's first definition of integration is "the process of bringing together culturally and socially discrete groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national identity."¹ When used in this sense 'integration' generally presumes the existence of an ethnically plural society in which each group is characterized by its own language or self-conscious cultural qualities, although the problem may also exist in a political system which is made up of once distinct independent political unit with which people identified. This is the opposite view of the leaderships of the new nations. To them national loyalties are the essential prerequisite for the maintenance of political authority and the persistence of their system. Moreover, since the colonial rulers permitted only limited participation, the parochial sentiments of local people rarely entered into the making of any significant decisions of essential interest to policy-makers. Once the new nations permit a greater measure of public participation, then the integration requirements of the systems are higher.

This in a nut-shell is the main problem in new nations like Malaysia. The need to alleviate parochial interests is very great. The fact that a statement to this effect was made by the Malaysian Chinese Association's² president Mr. Tan Siew Sin³ at the Association's Central General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur on May 6th 1967 was evidence enough. He said, "Before we can establish a really united nation, the major racial groups (Malays, Chinese and Indians) in this country must come closer and closer together. The Malays must be less Malay in their outlook, the Chinese must be less Chinese and the Indians must be less Indians so that eventually we shall regard ourselves as Malaysians rather than as Malays, Chinese or Indians."⁴

From this statement we can observe certain facts:

- (1) There is as yet no "really united nation." (Words within commas are Mr. Tan Siew Sin's)

1. Myron Weiner: Ibid page 55.

2. MCA is one of the component party which made up the Alliance - the ruling party in Malaysia today.

3. Mr. Tan Siew Sin is also the Malaysian Finance Minister.

4. Quoted from speech made at the MCA Central General Assembly Kuala Lumpur on May 6th 1967. (Words in brackets added).

(2) Parochial communal feelings are predominant.

(3) That after eleven years of independence¹, the communal

The need for National Integration in New Nations. Malays, Chinese and Indians and not Malaysians.

Why is it that new nations with an ethnically plural society (eg. Malaysia) requires more national integration than did the colonial regimes which preceded them. The obvious answer is that the colonial governments were not concerned with national loyalties, but with creating classes who would be loyal to them as a colonial power. "Colonial governments" said Weiner, "paid little or no attention to the teaching of a 'national' language or culture, but stressed instead the teaching of the colonial language and culture."¹ We are all familiar with the fact that educated Vietnamese, Indonesians, Nigerians, Malaysians (now Malaysians) were educated in French, Dutch and English rather than in their own languages and traditions. The colonial governments viewed national loyalties as threats to their persistence. This is the opposite view of the leaderships of the new nations. To them national loyalties are the essential prerequisite for the maintainance of political authority and the persistence of their system. Moreover, since the colonial rulers permitted only limited participation, the parochial sentiments of local people rarely entered into the making of any significant decisions of essential interest to policy - makers. Once the new nations permit a greater measures of public participation, then the integration requirements of the systems are higher.

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1. Malaysia achieved her independence on 31st August, 1957. (Malaysia here is used synonymously with the former Malaya).

- (2) Parochial communal feelings are predominant.
(3) That after eleven years of independence¹, the communal groups still regard themselves as Malays, Chinese and Indians and not Malaysians.

Scope of Essay The rest of the essay will be concerned, mainly, with the reasons of the underdeveloped state, if not the non-existence, of "common loyalties" in Malaysia.¹ Is it because there is no common political culture in the country into which the people could become socialized? If there is no such common political culture, why is one non-existent or so slow in developing? These are some of the questions that are meant to be answered in the course of the essay. In other words, the rest of the essay will be concerned with the problems or obstacles that lie in the path of the evolution, development and maturing of a commonly shared, genuinely recognised and accepted political culture for Malaysia.

A special emphasis will be on the attitudinal barriers to national unity. As Butwell points out, "The most formidable resistance to integration in South East Asian countries comes not from the government or even the leading representatives of the ethnic communities, but from the lowest economic, educational, and social levels of society. Malaya (now Malaysia) is a particularly good example. The main barriers to national integration in that country are the ingrained attitudes and social habits of the ordinary Malays, Chinese and Indians."² It will also be the aim of this essay to verify the contention of this statement. Does the problem come only from the ordinary Malays, Chinese and Indians or is it aggravated by the leading representatives of the ethnic communities, the government or even the political parties.

1. Malaysia will henceforth refer to West Malaysia.

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1. Malaysia will henceforth refer to ~~West~~ Malaysia.

2. R. Butwell: South East Asia - Today and Tomorrow, page 117 (words bracket added).

Heterogeneity in the Malayan society is further evidenced by physical separation between the Malays and the non-Malays. Broadly speaking, the Malays are concentrated in the two northern states of Kedah and Perlis and the east of Kelantan, Pahang and Trengganu. The non-Malays predominate in the other states. See Table 1 overleaf.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION TO WEST MALAYSIA

The Historical Perspective - A Brief Survey of the Main Political issues since Independence.

West Malaysia (the former Malaya) is made up of the states of Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, Pahang, Penang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor and Trengganu. It consists of a peninsula which forms the most southerly portion of the land mass of South East Asia. In area it covers about 50,840 square miles with a population of about 8,052,000 people making roughly 153 persons per square mile.¹ It is numerically dominant, has helped to make communal bargaining a very prominent feature of Malaya was born in 1957 when it obtained its independence from its British colonial masters. Independence set the beginning of a new struggle - the struggle for nation-building.

The population of the Federation of Malaya in 1957 was 6,278,763. Of this figure, just under 50% were Malays,² 37% Chinese, about 12% Indians and about 0.2% others. "In these figures," says Ratnam "is contained the most significant feature of the Malayan plural society; the Malayan nation is one of numerical minorities. Also of vital importance is the fact that, as far as 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' groups are concerned, the Malays are slightly outnumbered by the immigrant non-Malays."³

It is within this context of pluralism, that most of the problems of nation-building in Malaysia emanated.

"To begin with," to quote Ratnam again, "communal divisions are not determined by racial differences alone. There is also a complete lack of cultural homogeneity, each community having its own religion, language, customs and habits. This naturally constitutes a very serious obstacle to unification; it is also the reasons why certain 'cultural' matters (particularly language) have come to constitute some of the most difficult political issues of present day

1. Quoted from 1st Malaysian Plan - Government Printers 1965. There is no official census since 1957.

2. The constitution defined 'Malay' as a "persons who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language conforms to Malay customs....." Article 160 amend. 26 of 1963.

3. K.J. Ratnam: "Communalism and the Political process in Malaya" - Pustaka Ilmu - 1965 page 1. - June 1968.

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Heterogeneity in the Malayan society is further evidenced by physical separation between the Malays and the non-Malays. Broadly speaking, the Malays are concentrated in the two northern states of Kedah and Perlis and the eastern states of Kelantan, Pahang and Trengganu. The non-Malays predominate in the other states. See Table 1 overleaf.

The urbanization pattern provides a valuable index of both physical separation and differing standards of living. Penang, Selangor and Perak, all on the west coast, are the most urbanized while Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis and Pahang are the least so. The first three, have a Chinese majority, while the other five are predominantly Malay as seen from Table 1. The urbanization pattern is given in Table 2 overleaf.

Thirdly, to add to the problem, political and economic powers are divided and separated along racial lines. Political power is largely with the Malays and economic powers with the Chinese. "This feature," says Ratnam, "together with the fact that no community is numerically dominant, has helped to make communal bargaining a very prominent feature of Malaysian politics, by emphasizing interdependence."² This is a sensitive political issue. The Malays feel that they are exploited by the Chinese economically. "They, the Malays," said Syed Hussein Ali, a lecturer in the University of Malaya and one of the leaders of Party Rakyat,³ "point their fingers at the non-Malays, especially the Chinese as the over-privileged and exploiters who are mainly responsible for the poverty, suffering and deprivation of the Malays."⁴ The Chinese on the other hand feel strongly that the "Malays are in political control and are using that control in order to limit political, economic and educational rights, powers and privileges of the Malays as a whole and as a result, the non-Malays, (especially the Chinese) as a racial group, and without exception have been politically deprived of their privileges and rights as citizens in this country."⁵ Discontentment thus does not only exist in one section of the society but, to quote Syed Hussein Ali again, "it is indeed an irony, in fact, a tragedy that in this country, every racial group considers itself to be the most deprived, and that they conveniently find scapegoat for their plight in one another."⁶

To complicate matters and aggravating the situation there is

1. K.J. Ratnam: op. cit. Page 1.

2. K.J. Ratnam: Ibid. Page 2.

3. Party Rakyat is a left-wing predominantly Malay Party. Formerly with the Labour, it formed the Socialist Front.

4. Opinion: Vol. I, No. 10 - June 1968.

5. Opinion: op. cit.

6. Opinion: Vol. I, No. 10 - June 1968.

TABLE 1
COMMUNAL DISTRIBUTION BY STATES - 1957

	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Others	Total
Johore	444,907	392,425	71,002	19,231	927,565
Kedah	475,747	143,833	66,986	15,077	701,643
Kelantan	463,292	28,816	5,642	7,835	505,585
Malacca	743,252	120,690	23,248	4,056	291,246
Negeri Sembilan	151,426	149,911	54,428	8,566	364,331
Pahang	179,113	108,140	21,832	3,864	312,949
Penang	165,081	327,287	69,031	10,733	572,132
Perak	484,878	539,368	178,480	18,664	1,221,390
Perlis	71,268	15,763	1,547	2,288	90,866
Selangor	291,393	488,634	201,047	31,817	1,012,891
Trengganu	256,349	18,069	2,742	1,005	278,165
Total	3,726,706	2,332,936	695,985	123,136	6,278,763

*Source: K.J. Ratnam: "Communalism and Political Process" Pustaka Ilmu - 1965.

the conflict between the traditional claims of the Malays and the demands of the non-Malays, most of whom are locally born and have been accepted as Malaysian citizens. This is more a question of the legitimacy of the claims. "The Malays by virtue of being the 'sons of the soil' (and also in view of the special position of which they enjoyed under the British supremacy vis - a - vis the other Asians communities) insist that the legitimacy of this claim, and, "seek to ensure that the privileges given to the Malays are temporary

TABLE 2
URBAN POPULATION (GAZETTED AREAS BY 1,000 POPULATION AND OVER) BY STATES.

States	Population in 1957 (in million)	Urban Population in 1957 (in million)	% of Urban to total
Johore	926.9	377.8	40.8
Kedah	702.0	162.8	23.2
Kelantan	505.5	115.0	22.7
Malacca	291.2	84.4	29.0
Negeri Sembilan	364.5	119.4	32.8
Pahang	313.1	127.6	40.8
Penang	572.1	366.9	64.1
Perak	1,221.4	600.6	49.2
Perlis	90.9	8.6	9.5
Selangor	1,012.9	611.6	60.4
Trengganu	278.3	93.3	33.5

1. Ratnam: op. cit. Page 3.

2. Ratnam: op. cit. Page 3.

3. Goh Hook Guan - in an article contained in "Roket" the DAP political organ - July 1967.

*Source: Malaysia Yearbook, 1965 - page 50.

the conflict between the traditional claims of the Malays and the demands of the non-Malays, most of whom are locally born and have been accepted as Malaysian citizens. This is more a question of the legitimacy of the claims. "The Malays by virtue of being the 'sons of the soil' (and also in view of the special position of which they enjoyed under the British rule and which preserved their political supremacy vis - a - vis the other Asians communities) insist that their interests should be safeguarded through certain concessions and privileges."¹ The non-Malays contest the legitimacy of this claim, and, "seek to ensure that the privileges given to the Malays are temporary and that their own rights as local citizens will be progressively increased."² Moreover some of the non-Malays do not regard the Malays as the indigenous people of this country. They regard the Malays as another immigrant race. To them the indigenous people are the Orang Asli i.e. the Malayan Aboriginies. This is evident from the speech by Mr. Goh Hock Guan, the Secretary General of the Democratic Action Party,, when he said that "the most urgent problems facing Malaysia is how to integrate the diverse immigrant stocks, Malays, Chinese, Indians and Ceylonese together with the indigenous natives the Orang Asli³ In these contesting claims lie the central theme in Malay/non-Malay relations; for the central problem in Malaysian nation-building is nothing more than an attempt to establish and maintain viable equilibrium between the different communities. However, maintaining a viable equilibrium between the different races is not (and it should not be) the end of the struggle for nation-building in this country. The aim is (and should be) as Mr. Lim Kit Siong, one of the Executive Council Members of DAP and the party's organizing Secretary, said, "to produce a nation of Malaysians and not only a Malaysian Nation." In the course of this analysis it will be demonstrated why according to Lim Kit Siong after eleven years of independence "we have a Malaysian nation and not a nation of Malaysian." What he meant was internationally there exist a Malaysian nation but internally there is no Malaysian nation. In other words, the aim and the end of the struggle of nation-building in this country is to produce a nation that will have a Malaysian focus of orientation i.e. when the various communities in this country will reduce, if not completely stopping, identifying themselves as Malays, Chinese or Indians first but rather, all will (and must) identify themselves as Malaysian first, if this nation is to survive at all.

1. Ratnam: op. cit. Page 3.

2. Ratnam: op. cit. Page 3.

3. Goh Hock Guan - in an article contained in "Rocket" the DAP political organ - July 1967.

Differences in race as it were, are bad enough. In Malaysia this is compounded by differences in religion, languages, culture and economic disparities. The Malays are almost 100% Muslims. They speak Malay language and, even a large percentage of them are considered the have-nots of the nations. The non-Malays retain their ethnic, cultural, religious characteristics and speak their own languages. "Economically, they are better off than their Malay counterparts." These causes dissensions in the Malaysian politics and since these differences run along racial lines, the The Communalistic Pattern of the Political Process in Malaysia (West Malaysia)

Milne in his book "The Government and Politics of Malaysia" says "Malaysia is not only a transitional society which is attempting to modernize itself, it is also a multi-racial society with the problem of achieving national unity." 1. This problem is made prominent by the fact that her economic problems are overshadowed by her high standard of living. The plural nature of Malaysian society made national unity an essential prerequisite if national integration is to have any meaning at all. Furnivall has defined a "plural society" as one comprising two or more communal groups "living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit." 2. A reference to Malaysian plurality is actually a reference to the country's ethnic diversity; for Malaysia pluralism simply means multi-racialism. National unity within this context does not only mean racial tolerance or racial harmony. It means more and much deeper. National Unity in Malaysian plural society means the giving up of communal outlook by each community (race). Instead, each communal group will begin a national centred orientation, or in the Malaysian context to "develop a Malaysian centred of orientation." 3. When we have this and "when the diverse races, cultures and languages feel closer to fellow Malaysians of other races than to their blood brothers either in China, India or Indonesia" 4. then we have national unity and that will be the beginning of national integration. This, however, is not an easy process.

1. Milne: "The Government and Politics in Malaysia", Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1967. Page 228

2. Quoted from Ratnam, K.J. "Communalism and the Political Process in Malaysia". Pustaka Ilmu 1967. Page 210. discussed later.

3. } Mr. Lim Kit Siang, the Organising Secretary, and a Central

4. } Executive *Council Member of the DAP when interviewed by the writer.

very much because the clear aim of its sponsors is the setting up of a university which will cater exclusively for the needs of the Chinese educated."¹ That the Government is not in agreement with this proposal is made known by Mr. Tan Siew Sin when in the same speech he said, "There is nothing wrong with this because we are aware that at the moment those needs² have not been adequately met, but it is important to ensure that in catering for one section of our population, we do not, at the same time, also isolate that section from the rest of the population."

The censure of the Government on the proposal did not stop the Chinese from further clamouring for the establishment of the Merdeka University. Under pressures (especially as the proposals came from within the party) the Government gave way. However, it saved its face by not completely consenting to the establishment of a full Merdeka University, but rather resorted to a compromise. "The practical way of resolving the difficult problems posed by the proposal, was to set up a polytechnic"; said Tan Siew Sin.³ The polytechnic was later referred as the 'proposed MCA college' (the proper name was as yet unspecified). On ~~the~~ 5/7/1968 The Starits Times published the news that "the Government today gave its blessing to the MCA-initiated-college to provide technical and professional training to young Malaysians". This was announced by the Minister of Education, Inche Khir Johari, who also said that the "Government has agreed to give financial assistance on a dollar-to-dollar basis, and recognise in principle this colleges' diplomas."⁴

Right from the beginning, perhaps anticipating criticism, Mr. Khan^w Kai Boh, the chairman of the MCA's working team on Higher Education planning, stated that "there was no political bias involved in the setting up of the college. The fact that the MCA had taken the initiative was purely incidental."⁵

If the proposed college was meant to quieten the proposers of the Merdeka University it did not achieve its aim. The proposers insisted with their demand. "The MCA should support the Merdeka University plan because its proposed college would not be able to absorb the thousand of secondary school-leavers. The Chinese have the right to start their own University",⁶ the president of the Federation

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1. Sunday Times: 24/3/68
 2. Referring to the needs to cater for the school-leavers.
 3. Sunday Times: 24/3/68
 4. Straits Times: 15/7/68
 5. Straits Times: 15/7/68
 6. Straits Times: 18/7/68

of Malaya Chinese School Association and one of the proposers of the Merdeka University said.

The Government's approval of the MCA initiated college yet brought reaction from another section of the population. This time from the Malays.

Prominent among the Malay dissenters is the Malay language society of the University of Malaya. The society opposed not the establishment of the college as an institution of higher learning anymore than the multi-media instructions that are to be used in the college. The Society contended that this is not compatible with the Government's educational policy.¹ The President, in voicing the opinion of the society said, "The society cannot compromise with any section of the population who have diverted from the educational policy. The establishment of the college with multi-language media will raise again the question of language in the country."² The society was not alone to make its opinion laudible, a lecturer in the department of history, University of Malaya, Inche Zainal Abidin Wahid, joined the society, not opposing the set up of the college in itself, but rather to propose the set up of a National University. As he said it, "A national university which fully uses the Malay language as a medium of instruction should be set up first, prior to the setting up of universities with Chinese or other medium of instructions."³ He justified this claim by saying that the number of school-leavers from the Malay-medium schools is double the number of those from the Chinese

1. To quote the "Report of the Higher Education Planning Committee" - Government Printers, Kuala Lumpur: The Government's educational policy was streamlined in the 1956 Razak Report the main objective of which was "to establish a national system of education acceptable to the people as a whole and which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, having regard to the intention of to make Malay the national language of the country whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of other communities living in the country." This educational policy was first incorporated in the 1957 Education Ordinance. In order to secure the effective execution of this policy, provision is made in the new 1961 Education Act for the progressive development of an educational system in which the National language is the main medium of instruction. (Page 179.)

By Article 152 of the Constitution, the Malay language was made the National language, and with effect from 1/9/1967, by the Language Act Bill passed in March, 1967, "It was to become the sole official language of this country."

2. Sunday Times: 21/7/68

3. Berita Harian: Friday, 26/7/68

7. Further discussion of this party will be discussed later

8. PMIP has nine seats in Parliament now.

medium schools. "In 1967", he continued, "there were 217,214 school-leavers from Malay-medium schools as compared to 60,014 from Chinese-medium schools."¹.

The same proposals came from another lecturer - Syed Hussein Ali of the Malay studies department and this quickly got the support of the Malay language society of the University of Malaya or the PBMUM.² The Berita Harian, an influential Malay newspaper, in an editorial issue of 30/7/1968, did not exactly propose the setting up of a National University, but nevertheless, pointed out that "Whether the setting up of a National University is possible or not now, the truth of the matter is that the school-leavers³ from the Malay-medium schools are not catered for in a higher institution set up especially for them". The implication is obvious enough. Another group which so far has joined in, in giving their opinion on the proposed MCA college, is the National Schools (Malay-medium) Teachers Association of the state of Trengganu, which at a recent meeting decided to urge the Government to set up a National University so that the number of students from the Malay-medium schools to reach University education will be increased.⁴.

It must, however, be pointed out here that there are a number of students from the Malay-medium schools that are absorbed into the University of Malaya. The number is, nevertheless, negligible. As pointed out by Inche Zainal Wahid,⁵ last year the intake of Malay-medium students into the University was only 1% of the total 217,214 school-leavers. The number may be negligible, but compared to the Chinese and Tamil school-leavers, the Malay-medium school-leavers had a better deal, as pointed out by a speaker⁶ in a symposium on National Integration, organised by the Economic Society of the University of Malaya on 23/5/1968, none of the students from the Chinese or Tamil schools ever reached the University of Malaya.

In any case, the discussion above, exemplifies how a certain issue can be interpreted racially. One may wonder here why the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP)⁷ - a party which has the most number of opposition seats in Parliament⁸ and with 100% Malay membership - does not give any stand on this issue. Asked about this

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1. Berita Harian: Friday, 26/7/68
 2. Berita Harian: Saturday, 27/7/68
 3. Obviously it means qualified school-leavers
 4. Berita Harian: 1/8/68
 5. See above
 6. Dr. Rajkumar of the Labour Party
 7. Further discussion of this party will be discussed later
 8. PMIP has nine seats in Parliament now.

the Executive Secretary¹. of the party stated that as yet². the party did not make its stand official, but that the party did not agree with the proposed set up of the college is obvious enough. The reasons given are almost the same as given by the PBMUM. He further stated that the PMIP would strongly urge or rather demand the set up of a National University.

The establishment of another institution of higher learning is desirable in Malaysia to accomodate the many school-leavers who are qualified to do further education. That there are a large number who seek further education but are unable to be accomodate⁴ due to inadequate places, can be seen from the figures given by the Minister of Education³. He pointed out that in 1967 the intake of the Serdang college of Agriculture was only 200 out of a total 7,000 applicants. In the same year, the Technical college admitted 370 students from 2,000 applicants⁴. The proposed MCA college may provide a solution to this. But this was considered as a racial institution. The treasurer to the Party Gerakan Ra'ayat Malaysia, Mr. V. Veerapan, in commenting on the proposed college, said, "What is needed now is not the MCA college, but a college which is devoid of political or racial intention⁵." The MCA on its part, defended their proposed college as to be devoid of political intention. In fact it even considered those who oppose it as "racialists". In referring to the statement made by the PBMUM⁶, the MCA replied "as far as we can ascertain, the statement issued by the society reflects a perverse social outlook",⁷ and the secretary to the MCA in a press statement pointed out that "The MCA has never said it is going to be a multi-lingual college, but has stressed that it is going to be a multi-racial college, which is in conformity with the general education policy of the Alliance".⁸ Nevertheless, he did not specifically say what the medium of instruction would be, which seems to be the main concern of the Malay population. Perhaps, however, we can make a conclusion as to what the medium of instruction would be, from the comment on the proposed college contained in the

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1. In a private interview with the writer
 2. At the time of writing this exercise - i.e. July, 1968
 3. Sunday Times: 28/7/68
 4. He did not give the figure for University admission
 5. Straits Times: 25/7/68
 6. See above
 7. Straits Times: 24/5/68
 8. Sunday Times: 28/7/68

editorial of the Straits Times of 15/7/1968. The editorial said, "the intention is to set up a college accepting students from all educational streams." All educational streams would mean from the Malay, Chinese, English and Tamil Medium schools. This would mean that the students accepted will be most proficient in the languages that they are instructed in in their former schools. Thus it is necessary that when going for further education they need to be instructed in the languages in which they are most proficient, otherwise, they will be handicapped. The logical conclusion is, therefore, multi-lingual instruction. #1.

This is but one example of the "chain reaction" as mentioned earlier. This chain reaction could be equated to the multiplier concept.

This "chain reaction" indicates one clear thing, the sectional nature of the demands. These demands may be based on needs, but they may also be due to 'Communal jealousy'. Each community has the feeling that there should not be communal bias on the part of the Government when giving favours or benefits. This serves to illustrate that though, superficially, there may be communal understanding, this mutual understanding has not reached the stage whereby one community understands why another community should receive the Government's special attention. When we are talking about this "special attention" we are talking about the "Malay special privileges".

Article 153 of the Constitution provides for the special position of the Malays and the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong shall exercise his functions "to ensure the reservation for Malays of such proportion as he may deem reasonable, of positions in the Public Service (other than the Public Service of a State), and of scholarships, exhibitions and the similar, educational or training privileges or special facilities given or accorded by the Federal Government, and when any permit or licence for the operation of any trade or business is required by the Federal Law, then, subject to the provisions of that Law and this Article of such permits and licences."

1. At the time of writing it is stated that the college will take its first batch of students in 1969.

On 2/8/68 two more groups voiced their protests - (1) An UMNO division of Johor Bahru Timor, and (2) The Federation Union of Malay Students or the Gabongan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung - GPMS

Source Berita Harian: Friday, 2/8/68

This Article is the most debated and controversial issue in the Malaysian political process. It is also an explosive issue. The non-Malays fail to understand why the Malays should have special position in this country. Why should there be 'bumiputra' and non-bumiputra citizens? The Malays considered themselves the bumiputras (the indigenous people) of this country. This claim is legitimised by the Government. The Council of Trust for the Indigenous People (MARA) - an institution to help the bumiputras - the Malays - in the economic field is a semi-Government body. The legitimacy of the contention that the Malays are the sons of this country's soil is challenged by the non-Malays. The DAP, a party which claims to be multi-racial, but with Chinese leadership, called on the Government to stop classifying citizens into bumiputras and non-bumiputras¹. and that aid should be given in hours of need, rather than on race.

The Malays, on the other hand, feel that this is necessary. They feel that economically they are far behind the Chinese. They need to catch up with the Chinese in order to have fair competition. That is why they feel that the Government's role in helping them is justified. The special privileges clause in the Constitution is meant for this. As Inche Musa Hitam, the Executive Secretary General of the UMNO said, "the clause is only a temporary measure to provide the Malays with a means of entering the economic field, which as it is now, is firmly in the grip of the Chinese". According to him, without the help of the Government, the Malays would never step forward economically. MARA will provide a base whereby the Malays can start to compete. When the competition is at par then the Article 153, as Inche Musa said, will no longer be needed. Then everybody will have a fair competition. If the Government's do not take a hand to help the Malays, this will dissatisfy and alienate them. They will then look in anger at the Chinese whom they still regard as the immigrants, and that they, as sons of this soil, need special privileges.

This is what causes grievances on the part of the non-Malays. They had achieved their present position through sheer hard struggle without the aid of the Government. Why should some section of the population be favoured? Where is the promise of the Alliance Government that "everyone in this country has an equal status in its development and prosperity"? This was one of the many resolutions adopted by the Alliance convention held in Kuching on 26/10/1967. The Malays, on their part however, wonder why this would cause grievances. As Inche Musa Hitam said, "What is MARA compared to the Malayan Finance Company, for instance. What is Bank Bumiputra compared to the non-bumiputra banks?" MARA may mean a more approachable loan agency for the Malays, but, as the Malays think, this in no way hinders the non-Malays from getting loans from various other agencies and which a Malay businessman may not have access to. "What they (Malays) want", said Musa Hitam, "is only a base for fair competition." Since, as a race, they are left far behind, the Malays feel that they should be aided, if a just and equal

1. Rocket: 20/4/1968. Volume 3, Number 4. Page 4

society, where one race is not jealous and curious of the other, is to be created. To quote Inche Ghafar Baba, the Minister Without Portfolio and the chairman of MARA, "..... to establish a truly Malaysian nation in which there would be equal opportunity for every community and citizen."

Another organisation, FAMA (Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority), was set up also with the purpose of helping the bumiputras. It is to provide facilities for Malay farmers to market their produce. Usually the rural farmers, mostly Malays, market their goods through the middlemen, who are mostly Chinese. It is the nature of business to make profit. Then it is expected that the middlemen "buy cheap" from the farmers and later sell the produce at higher prices. The farmers feel that they are exploited and resent this. The fact that they are exploited by another race accentuates the resentment. It was thought that if the middlemen institution was abolished and replaced with another institution, then the farmers can perhaps fetch a higher price for their goods. The idea was not to abolish the Chinese middlemen, but middlemen as a whole. Hence the set up of FAMA. Naturally the operation of FAMA clashes with the operation of the middlemen, and as FAMA is aimed at helping the Malay farmers, the Malay farmers are urged to deal with FAMA. FAMA thus thrives at the expense of the middleman. Rumours that the agency is anti-Chinese and anti-middlemen began to be whispered around. The allegation may have some truth in it. FAMA may be a racial institution if we look from the management and operation point of view. It is managed mostly by Malays. It deals mostly with Malays. But in any case, any institution set up to help one section of the community may be viewed as racial. One may thus view FAMA or MARA, for that matter, as racial agencies. On the other hand, one may regard them as agencies to help the "have-nots", as, according to UMNO, "As long as there is a wide imbalance between the races in this country, this will provide the issues for conflict", and so the policy of the Government is "to help the Malays and other indigenous people in the interest of Malaysia as a whole."¹. (Senu Abdul Rahman).

Whatever the reason is, the establishment of these agencies creates two situations. One the one hand, they widen racial differences. On the other, they provide loopholes whereby the Government can be criticised. One of the executive council members of DAP, when asked by the writer, pointed out that the DAP realises that the Malays are economically backward, and that they should be aided. But not all the Chinese on the other hand, are rich. There are poor Chinese as there are poor Malays. So the Government is not being fair when only one section of the population is favoured. Moreover, the DAP feels that such agencies as the FAMA will not help rural farmers much, because the DAP believes that it is not the middlemen who are exploiting the the farmers, it is the landlord. In spite of the Government's policies, the DAP pointed out that the rural income has not risen appreciably

1. Quoted from souvenir of UMNO: 20 tahun

since 1957.¹ This contention tallies with the opinion of one Malay student leader. At a forum on "Whether Racialism can be Eradicated in Malaysia", at the Muslim College on 21/6/1968, the student leader - he is the Secretary General to the National Union of Muslim Students - pointed out that what the Alliance claims to be the upliftment of the standard of living of the rural people is a farce. He challenged those who claim this to reveal the real figures of the incomes of the rural people. So according to DAP, it is land reform that is needed in this country, not FAMA. FAMA "is only a drop in the ocean", to quote him. Though not stating it exactly, the DAP regards FAMA as an institution sponsored by the Government to replace Chinese middlemen. As Lim Kit Siang said, "instead of adopting a national approach to the problem of rural poverty, the Alliance politicians spouted a racist solution on the creation of Malay middlemen to replace Chinese middlemen."²

The PMIP, on the other hand, appreciate the idea of MARA, but question the sincerity of MARA. If the MARA really wants to help the Malays, the writer was told by the Secretary General, why then does MARA keep on dealing with the non-Malays in its operations. Thus by the multiplier effect, the non-Malays still get the most benefits. Of course, this argument is very weak, because it is a fact that almost 95% of the economy in this country is in the hands of the non-Malays. Thus any economic transaction will have to include the non-Malays as a party in the transaction. The PMIP however, believed that MARA could have direct international dealings. Timber bought by MARA need not be sold to the non-Malay sawmills. It could be exported direct. However, one should think that MARA is still in its infancy and exporting timber is not its only function.

Another Malay Party, the Party Rakyat, does not at all believe that Malay privileges will solve the basic Malay problems. "Let us be truthful now and admit", said one of its leaders, "that the Malay privileges do not solve the basic Malay problems, but instead further add to racial bitterness."³ What the Malay peasants need are more fundamental things. In this, the Party Rakyat and the DAP's views are similar. "They want land reform that will give them more land, and structural changes that will free them from exploitation by landlords, money-lenders and middlemen."

At least two Malay parties therefore do not support the Government's policies to help the Malays. But while the PMIP thinks that Article 153 is not an adequate guarantee of Malay privileges, Party Rakyat do not agree to the provision of Malay privileges as an instrument to help the Malays. Both however, believed that the Article only benefited two sections of the Malays, namely the rich, as Party

1. See Rocket: 16/8/1967, Volume 1 Number 1. Page 8

2. Quoted from Rocket: December, 1966, Volume 1 Number 5

3. Opinion: Volume 1 Number 8, 30/3/1968

Rakyat believes it and to UMNO members as PMIP believes it. How true this allegation is, is a matter of opinion. No social research was made about it. However, the writer had the opportunity of talking to innumerable rural folks, Malay students, Malay working class and Malay Government servants. A great majority of them hold to either of the above views. One conversation the writer overheard was, "Are only the UMNO members considered Malays in this country?". Thus Article 153 does not only dissatisfy the non-Malays, it is also a thorn in the flesh to some Malays, who claim that it only seems to heighten racial tension. While the provision of the Article is meant to uplift the standard of living of the Malays, these discontented Malays feel that the Malays benefit in no appreciable way. It was felt that only a section of the Malays benefit. The non-Malays exploit this Article to condemn the Malays of being spoon-fed. This is what angered the majority of the Malays. The writer had the experience of talking to various Malay students, who claim that the Article exists only in name to appease the Malays. The allocation of scholarships, for instance, was not based on need. There are discontented Malays as well as discontented non-Malays, over the issue of scholarships allocation. The poor Malays question the legitimacy of allocation of scholarships to the richer Malays when that allocation can increase the amount of scholarships given to the poorer Malays.

Article 153 thus creates discontented Malays as well as non-Malays.

The discussion above serves to point out further the disintegrated nature of and the extent of communal influence in the Malaysian political process. These problems are the extension of the basic problems as outlined in Chapter II. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is lack of national feeling among the various communities. Communal identification overrides national identification. Focus of orientation is communal rather than national. There is thus the need of making "all our communities realise and feel that they are wholly committed to the cause of Malaysia and to the well-being of their country,"¹ and not to lead Malaysia "as a result of racial tensions, dissolve in the not too distant future in an orgy of racial violence." In other words, the threat and danger of racial tensions is fully realised², and it is considered as the most possible factor of breaking Malaysia up.

1. Alliance Convention: 26/10/1967

2. Racial violence erupted for two weeks in November, 1967

Another case in point involves a majority of the Indian community. Their lack of sense of belonging and lack of identification with the country is evident from their vigorous cheering for their national team in sports events for athletic or games fixtures.

Low Level of National Identification

The question that arises here is, as was pointed out by Mr. Lim Kit Sieng when interviewed by the writer, "What happened to nation-building in this country after 11 years of independence?". Why is there an apparently low level of national orientation? A glaring example of this is the lack of respect shown to the National Anthem. Recently it was directed that the National Anthem, besides being played at the official functions, should also be played in cinema theatres before any film shows. A visitor to this country would be surprised to note the lack of respect shown to the National Anthem. The writer and a friend had the experience of being the only two people to stand up ^{to} for the Anthem in a packed theatre. It cannot be said that ~~there are~~ there are people who are simply lazy to stand up for the Anthem. Not only one incident can be quoted, and cinema halls are not the only examples. It is also observed that those who usually pay little respect to the Anthem are the non-Malays. This is not to say that there are no Malays who show disrespect, but the number of occasions observed point out that those who show disrespect more are the non-Malays. Their numbers are far too many and varied to be interpreted as coincidence. This was a sensitive issue. The National Anthem is in Malay. The Malays thus were deeply touched and angered at this show of disrespect. This to them was an insult. The Government, on the other hand, was embarrassed. It was thus necessary to give another direction - that the National Anthem will only be played at official occasions, and that those found showing disrespect will be liable to be arrested. Element of force was thus used to obtain compliance. This is a mockery to the dignity of the nation.

This lack of respect to a national symbol can be the result of two factors.

- (1) The lack of sense of belonging to this country, i.e. the low-level national identification.
- (2) The unawareness of the meaning and implication of the national symbol.

In this country, however, the second factor, though it might be a great contributing factor, is not regarded as such. It is the first factor which is brought to the fore. It is, however, considered in two ways. The opposition parties, exploiting this issue to embarrass the Government, alleged that this is the result of a lack of sense of belonging. The Government, on the other hand, claims that those who disrespect the National Symbols, be it the National Anthem, National Flag or the King, are those who are disloyal to this country. The Government is, of course, trying to camouflage the real cause, i.e. the lack of national identification, as this would mean exposing its failure in its nation-building. Disloyalty would only result out of lack of national consciousness, lack of sense of belonging and low level of national orientation. The question of disloyalty will not arise if there is a high degree of sense of belonging, and a deep feeling of devotion to the nation.

Another case in point involves a majority of the Indian community. Their lack of sense of belonging and lack of identification with this country is shown by the fact of their vigorous cheering for any Indian team that comes down here for athletic or games fixtures. This might mean that they are good spectators giving inspiration for foreign teams, but it can also mean that they tend to identify themselves with these people. The number of occasions observed, and the fact that it is Malaysian Indians¹, who cheer most for Indian teams instead of the Malaysian teams, points to the latter case. Also one could note the number of Indians who turn out to greet any leader from India.

All these examples point out to the low level of national orientation in this country, and the necessity of overcoming this problem, because as long as there is lack of national orientation, communal identity will grow strong. This would mean a greater communal segregation. In a plural society this is not a healthy situation, because then the political process in this country will be forever characterised by communal bargaining, and once the system cannot accommodate this bargaining, the system will crumble. This is not conducive to the establishment of a viable system which is so important in development of new nations like Malaysia. Already the political process in Malaysia is marked by communal bargaining. This should not be allowed to prolong.

Before concluding this chapter, it is worthwhile pondering a while to examine in a brief discussion of the Malaysian ~~Institution~~ ^{Constitution} because this would help to a greater understanding of the communalistic pattern of the political process in Malaysia.

How can the Government then implement an education policy with "Malay as the main medium of instruction", when the other languages legitimately have the right to be the medium of instruction also?

It was the implication of this Act which prevented the Parliament from implementing the constitutional provision of making Malay the sole National language and official language ten years after 1957. The National Language Act of 1967 was aimed at making Malay the sole National and official language of the country. But at the same time it is provided that translation in whatever language for wherever thought necessary should also be used, and that English should be continued to be used for any relevant purposes. In effect, the Act, as the PMIP Secretary General puts it, "provides a strong base for the implementation of the policy of multi-lingualism."³. This, as Dato' Asri, PMIP leader,

1. J.M. Palmer: "Malaysia" in Kabin (ed) - Government and Politics in South-east Asia. Page 322.

2. Not so much as the other races
Asian Survey, Volume VI, Number 4, April, 1966.

3. Article published by PMIP: 7/3/1967, commenting on the Act.

said in his speech of the Act Debate, is a violation of the constitutional provision of Article 152. This created dissatisfaction among the Malaysians. The Malaysian Constitution as Reference to Legitimate Sectoral Claims. The Director of Dewan Negara resigned from his post in the UMNO Executive Council. The Act did not also please the non-Malays,

The Malaysian Constitution of 1963 is in fact, as Norman Palmer aptly described it, "the Malayan Constitution of 1957 appropriately amended."¹ Prominent in the constitutions are the various provisions safeguarding the position of the indigeneous people, while at the same time, guaranteeing certain rights to all. As a result, the quest to constitutional legitimacy becomes communally defined. However, how significant the constitution actually is as a determinant of the character of the political process is difficult to define. For in any case, it is often true of the politics of multi-racial societies as Grossholtz says that, "Conflicts of interests which would be handled through institution take on racial and religious overtones which are impervious to legal rules and electoral majorities."² In other words, it is immaterial whether or not the Constitution provides safeguards to certain groups; the political process would still operate along racial lines.

Nevertheless, it is true that the Malaysian Constitution provides certain communal interests with legal "rights". We take some special examples: Article 152, sub-section I, for instance, while it provides that, "the National Language shall be the Malay language", it also states that "no persons shall be prohibited or prevented from using (otherwise than for special purposes) or from teaching or learning any other language, and nothing in this clause shall prejudice the right of the Federal Government or of any State Government to preserve and sustain the use and study of the language of any other community in the Federation." How can the Government then implement an education policy with "Malay as the main medium of instruction", when the other languages legitimately have the right to be the medium of instruction also?

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1. J.M. Palmer: "Malaysia" in Kahin (ed) - Government and Politics in South-east Asia. Page 322., 1967. Volume 2, Number 3.

2. J. Grossholtz: "An Exploration of Malaysian Meanings" Asian Survey, Volume VI, Number 4, April, 1966.

3. Article published by PMIP: 7/3/1967, commenting on the Act.

said in his speech of the Act Debate, is a violation of the constitutional provision of Article 152. This created dissatisfaction among the Malays. Soon after the passing of the Act, the Director of Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka¹, Tuan Syed Nasir Ismail resigned from his post in the UMNO Executive Council. The Act did not also please the non-Malays, in any way, because it fails to provide concretely, "that the language of instruction ^{and} examination in all National Type Primary and Secondary Schools will be English, Chinese or Tamil as the case may be".² The Act was already a compromise enough, but it failed to give satisfaction to any section, except perhaps, the Alliance Government. However, the status of Malay as a National Language is accepted. As to it being the sole official language, this is still questionable. But the Language Act, 1967, should serve to quieten the language issue, because the provision itself did not, in any way, specify that Malay be the sole official language. Other languages may be used if and when thought necessary.

Another case in point is Article 3. While it provides that Islam is the religion of the Federation, it gives freedom to the practice of other religions. This has led to some confusion, because the Constitution nowhere states that the Government will give material aid (e.g. financial aid to set up mosques) only to Islam. Thus when aid is given to set up mosques, the other religions also demand aid to set up their places of worship. As one prominent politician³ pointed out, sometimes the non-Muslim communities demand aid, not because they need it so much, but because the Muslims were given aid.

It is in this sense that the Constitution helps to perpetuate claims to sectorial legitimacy. The constitutional frame-work thus serves as a reference for sectorial claims. These sectorial claims are in turn perpetuated by the styles of interest articulation in this country. This will be examined in the next chapter.

2. Devan Nair: Racket, March, 1967. Volume 2, Number 3.

1. It is an agency established by the Government to help promote and develop the growth of the Malay language.

3. The Mentri Besar of Selangor: Dato' Harun Haji Idris,
at a private interview.

purely communal party or one which is disciplined to mass action, more or less along communist lines.¹ An editorial in the "Straits Times" among other things, stated that "since economic imbalances are apprehended in real life in communal terms, and generate their sharpest and most dangerous tensions at the communal level, it is in these terms and at this level that remedies must, for the time being, be applied² Perhaps, Milne summarises all the above arguments when he says that "..... in a multi-racial country like Malaya, THE STYLES OF INTEREST ARTICULATION, will, to a large extent, be dictated by the ethnic composition of its support at any given time, and will, in turn, largely determine the future ethnic support."³

The Political Parties

Political parties play an important rôle in the articulation of interests in Malaysian politics. In fact, compared with other institutions like Trade Unions and religious organisations, political parties are the best organised means of interest articulation. As implied earlier, the interests articulated are communal ones and the political parties are racially based: the political conflict in Malaysia is a conflict between racial interest groups. And as long as interest groups continue to be identified with racial divisions, the nature of conflict will not alter significantly for many years to come. That interest groups are based on sectional or racial basis, and not based on other criteria, is one of the immediate obstacles to the development of an integrated political process, which in turn is essential if national integration is to take place. In Malaysia, even the 'socialist parties' are racially based. For example, the Labour Party of Malaya depends mainly on Chinese support, while the Party Rakyat appeals to the Malays. The two parties merged to form the 'Socialist Front', but have since separated again. It and subordinated all interests to the struggle for independence, communalism, as manifested. If the Malaysian Constitution is, in fact, the legal compromise that has been arrived at by the different communities,¹ the Malaysian political process could very well be studied in terms of the attempts by the various communities to put into practice or to acquire what the Constitution has guaranteed for them. Problems have been such an overriding factor that it inhibits the articulation of more "Communalism is still a very strong force in the country's political life", says Ratnam, "and as long as there are communal demands there will have to be communal parties to champion them."² Silcock argues that, "one problem of democratic government in a plural society that has received too little attention is the effect on political structure of the fact that only those with some education are able to communicate with one another. The consequence is almost inevitably that a party with a mass membership must be neither a

1. R.S. Milne: "Singapore's Exit from Malaysia; The Consequence of Ambiguity", Asian Survey, Volume 7, Number 1.

2. K.J. Ratnam: "Communalism and The Political Process in Malaya", Pustaka Ilmu, Kuala Lumpur. Pages 164/5.

purely communal party or one which is disciplined to mass action, more or less along communist lines."¹. An editorial in the "Straits Times" among other things, stated that "since economic imbalances are apprehended in real life in communal terms, and generate their sharpest and most dangerous tensions at the communal level, it is in these terms and at this level that remedies must, for the time being, be applied"². Perhaps, Milne summarises all the above arguments when he says that " in a multi-racial country like Malaysia, the kind of issues a party stresses, will, to a large extent, be dictated by the ethnic composition of its support at any given time, and will, in turn, largely determine the future ethnic composition of its support."³.

Or perhaps, the reason for the existence of racially based parties might be founded in Malaysian history. As Radim Soenarno notes, "It is generally accepted that the Malay and Indonesian nationalist movements began as a reaction against the encroachment upon their respective spheres of life by the new, twentieth century alien population, especially the Europeans and Chinese. In Malaya this reaction started in about 1926 when the first Malay Association was formed. In Indonesia, it started very much earlier - in 1908 when the first party, which was 'purely cultural and social' was founded. In Malaya the 'social and cultural' aspect or phase of the movement lasted until 1937 when quasi-political parties sprang up."⁴.

Whatever the reasons for the existence of a racially based parties, the important point to note is the all-embracing character of these communal parties. The politics of communalism is in a sense, comparable to the politics of anti-colonial nationalism. While anti-colonial nationalism allied all national support and subordinated all interests to the struggle for independence, communalism, as manifested in the communally organised parties, has assumed the role of aggregator and articulator of the interests of the different races. It is as if the political, economic, social or cultural interests are identifiable and are capable of being represented at the racial or communal level. Or, to put it in another way, the communal problems have been such an overriding factor that it inhibits the articulation of more specific interests.⁵.

the Parliamentary (Dewan Rakyat) and State Legislative Assembly. General Elections 1964 of the States of Malaya

1. T.H. Silcock: "Towards a Malayan Nation". Page 71.
2. Straits Times: 11/6/1965
3. Milne: "Singapore's Exit from Malaysia: The Consequence of Ambiguity". Asian Survey. Volume , Number 1.
4. R. Soenarno: "Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945". Journal of South-east Asia History. Volume I, Number 1, March 1960. Page 23.
5. L.W. Rye: "The Politics of South-east Asia in the Politics of Developing Areas". Almond and Coleman (eds)

(3) The UDP had dissolved to merge with a new party, the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan)

Characteristics of most multi-racial societies in newly independent countries. There exists in Malaysia today, a vast number of political parties, some of which are not even represented in Parliament.

The last election held was in 1964. Underneath is given the list of parties and their strength in Parliament.* (Total Parliamentary Constituencies in 1964 election was 104).

TABLE 3

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR
PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTH

Parties	Seats
Alliance	89
Pan-Islamic Malaysian Party (PMIP)	9
Socialist Front (SF)	2
Peoples Progressive Party (PPP)	2
United Democratic Party (UDP)	1
Peoples Action Party (PAP)	1
	<hr/> 104 <hr/>

* Source: Report on the Parliamentary (Dewan Ra'ayat) and State Legislative Assembly, General Elections 1964 of the States of Malaya.

The strength of the Alliance is the most significant feature in this table. Since the elections, these changes had occurred:

- (1) The Socialist Front had disintegrated. The two components, Labour Party and Party Rakyat decided to go separate ways.
- (2) The Peoples Action Party had changed its name to Democratic Action Party, after Malaysia and Singapore's separation.
- (3) The UDP had dissolved to merge with a new party, the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan)

separate All the parties, with the exception of PMIP, claimed to be non-communal. The PMIP might be prepared in some situation, to admit that it is a communal party. This can be deduced from a statement in a local paper made by one of the PMIP leaders, "The PMIP wishes to fight for the Malays in this country and make Malay the National Language."¹ Concerning the other parties, Ratnam and Milne said, "Whatever (their) professions of faith, and (their) aspirations, they depend heavily on the votes of particular racial groups."² As they depend heavily on racial votes, their appeal is then communal. A study to this effect was made by Ratnam and Milne in their book "The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964." They pointed out that, "the opposition's reliance on racial votes is revealed in their decision to contest some seats rather than others and the differing degrees of success they had in seats of varying racial composition." The PMIP did not attempt to contest seats with 20% Malays, while the PPP and the DAP did not attempt to contest seats which had 50% of Malays.

In spite of all this, all the parties claim to be anti-communal. In fact, one of the paradoxes of the Malaysian party politics is that practically all parties claim to be anti-communal while having to appeal to communal support simultaneously.

That the political parties ^{are} and communally inclined, if not admittedly communal, is evidenced by the structure of their parties. It is due to the fact that the structure of the parties are communal that tends to perpetuate communal interest articulation. There is still the necessity of the emergence of political parties which can cut across racial or communal barriers. In other words, there is yet to exist in Malaysia a politically integrated party. As long as political parties tend to communal segregation, the process towards national integration will not gather any momentum. Even the Alliance, the party in power, is communal. Though Ratnam and Milne mentioned only the opposition parties as to rely on racial votes, and the fact that the Alliance contested every seat in the 1964 election, this does not preclude the Alliance from the communally-structured party group. The Alliance claims to represent all the races in this country. This, in a sense is true, as the party is composed of:

- (1) UMNO - United Malays National Organisation
- (2) MCA - Malaysian Chinese Association
- (3) MIC - Malaysian Indian Congress

But structurally, the Alliance is not an integrated political organisation. The various components remain segregated. It is only co-ordinated at the top. As Milne said, "The Alliance formula is that a number of communal parties are joined 'at the top' in an inter-communal alliance."³ At the party-level, each component party goes

¹ 122 Quoted from Ratnam and Milne: "The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964". University of Malaya Press 1967. Page 369.

3. R.S. Milne: "Government and Politics in Malaysia" Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston 1967. Page 88.

separate ways. The UMNO appeals to the Malays to support UMNO. The MCA asks the Chinese to unite behind MCA. However, the Alliance is a most creditable political organization in the sense that it serves as a built-in buffer or neutralizer of the more crude expressions or manifestations of communalism. The relative success of Alliance stems from the fact that it has so far managed to amass the 'loyalty' and therefore to organize and thus discipline the main bulk of Chinese and Malay electorate. At the least, the Alliance party serves to moderate the more radical of the forces of communalism within it which might otherwise be unleashed directly into the open political scene.

In any case, the Alliance is still considered a communal party. "The Alliance leaders have never been Malaysian leaders united in a single multi-racial political movement. They have been and continue to be essentially communal leaders. As such they have consistently reacted to national problems in a communal way."¹ A distinguished member of parliament, Dr. Tan Chee Khoo, formerly of Labour Party, now Secretary-General to Gerakan called the Alliance as a communal set-up made up of blatant communal parties.

One of the main criticisms that could be levelled at the Alliance Party structure is the lack of provision for horizontal communication between members of the various communal groups that make up the party. The three parties are only linked at the top (the Alliance executive council is made up of six members each from UMNO and MCA and three from MIC). Of mass parties in the Ivory Coast, A.R. Zolberg writes, ".....except at the uppermost echelons, the party organization.... provides little or no opportunity for horizontal communication between members of different ethnic groups. Face-to-face meeting which results from party activities take place within the confines of an ethnic group or sub-group."² The same observation or criticism could be made of the Alliance Party in Malaysia. It is only during election times that the Alliance presents a 'united front'. But in everyday operations of party activities, each party in the Alliance keeps very much to itself. Each component party has headquarters of their own. It is interesting to note that the political secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister once said that when any union or body asked for speakers for forums or symposiums, it would be much easier if the requests stated of what party should the required speaker be from - either from UMNO, MCA or MIC - because he said it is easier to get speakers under these tickets rather than under the Alliance ticket.

The communal structure of the Alliance Party is a popular target for criticisms by its opponents. The Alliance leaders could not convincingly deny that they are non-communal. They argue, however, that their method of working towards the establishment of an integrated mass party is the gradual pragmatic approach. Dr. Ismail, one of the top Alliance leaders, explained it this way. He said, "The Alliance method requires two steps: first inter-racial harmony between racially organized groups as the UMNO, MCA or MIC; second, the ultimate stage of

1. Rocket: Vol. 3. No. 6. June/July 1968.

2. A.R. Zolberg: "Mass Party and Political Integration", 1967.

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 25. February 1963. No. 1. Page 42.

non-communalism."¹ The idea is to foster national unity by unification on a uni-racial basis first and then to establish co-operation and ultimate convergence between these groups of disciplined racial organizations.¹ The PMIP is essentially a local party. The nine seats it won in the last election are all from the state of Kelantan. Another criticism pointed at the Alliance is that it is UMNO-dominated. "Thus," said Lim Kit Siang of DAP, "the MCA (or the MIC) is not an equal partner in the Alliance Party, but subservient to UMNO."² This is an appeal to the Chinese that it has no adequate representation in the country's politics. The Alliance pointed out that at the decision-making level, the Alliance Executive Council is represented by a ratio of 6:6:3 (UMNO, MCA and MIC). In point of fact, however, as Ratnam and Milne said, "from all evidence its exact composition is of no practical significance since decisions have to be unanimous".³ Thus it appears that at the decision-making level, there is no question of which party is dominating. Inche Musa Hitam, however, admitted the relative strength of UMNO in the Alliance. He claimed that this is perfectly natural in any political organization. UMNO has the biggest support compared to the other members, he pointed out. Therefore it is logical that UMNO should be the strongest component. Whatever the defect of Alliance, the fact still remains that it is the best political organization at the present moment to maintain an equilibrium of the races in the Malaysian political process. Even the opposition parties tend to agree with this. As Ratnam and Milne put it "despite all the criticisms made against it, it was significant that most of those interviewed from rival parties were agreed that the Alliance as the 'next best party' in the country; either because it was reasonable or because it was felt that the other parties were antagonised towards some community or communities."⁴ This indicates that the Alliance provides, at least, at the moment, the only national party. It appeals to all communal groups. In the final analysis, the interests aggregated are national in character, ~~interests~~ because it contain the interests of the three major races. ~~the leader is an Indian, but it is essentially a Chinese party.~~ Recently both parties reached This forms a sharp contrast to the next stronger party (in terms of Parliamentary strength) - the PMIP. This is purely a Malay party. The leaders do not try to deny this. However, they pointed out that it is "grossly wrong to refer to the PMIP as a political party based on racial preference just because it champions the cause of the Malays."⁵ The PMIP do not attempt to win the votes of the non-Malays. Its appeals are purely to the Malays - the only other alternative is the Muslims. It poses a strong challenge to UMNO as far as Malay votes is concerned. It is interesting to note that at the latest UMNO-Malays. The trend of the Party's struggle is thus obvious.

1. Economist - June 5th 1965.

2. Rocket - May 1967.

3. Ratnam & Milne - Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964.

Page 41.

4. Ratnam & Milne - op. cit. Page 42 - 43.

5. Dato Asri "Malay as a nation" in Bulan Bintang - Dec. 1967.

general assembly it was noted by a known Malay journalist that "delegates to UMNO twentieth general assembly spent much of their time discussing the PMIP there was almost total exclusion of discussion of other opposition groups."¹ The PMIP is essentially a local party. The nine seats it won in the last election are all from the state of Kelantan.

Another Malay party is the Party Rakyat. This is a breakaway from the Socialist Front. It has no parliamentary representation. Its influence is minimal. Evidence, however, indicates that it is popular among the Malay intelligensia. A number of university under-graduates are known to be its sympathisers. Some are even members of the party. Two of its executive council members are university lecturers. One is now lecturing in the University of Malaya. Another was a former lecturer of the University of London. Membership is not restricted to Malays. But its present leadership is Malay. As a socialist party, it tries to be non-communal. It fights for the working class irregardless of race. For example it did not believe that the Malays are in control of the political power and the Chinese the economic power. It regarded this as a myth.² According to Party Rakyat, political and economic powers are in the hands of the upper class Malays and Chinese respectively. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the Party Rakyat tries to appeal to both Chinese and Malays through the means of socialism. But all evidence point to the fact that its greatest support comes from the Malays - not much support either. At times Party Rakyat cannot help being a Malay party. For instance, its break-up with the Labour Party was over the language issue. Party Rakyat is insistent on Malay being the only one national and official language. The Labour Party, mainly a Chinese dominated party, insist on multi-lingualism.

Two other parties which are prominent in the Malaysian political arenas are the DAP and the PPP. Membership to both parties comes from all races. Leadership for both parties are however Chinese for DAP and Indians for PPP. The later is a significant case; the leader is an Indian, but it is essentially a Chinese party. Recently both parties reached the agreement not to contest in each other's area in the next election. Both parties brand the Alliance as communal and both appeal to the non-Malays. The DAP tried to convince the non-Malays that the Alliance is UMNO dominated and is 'de-culturing' other races. The PPP leader, Mr. Seenivasagam, when replying to a question at a forum organized by the University of Malaya Economics society on June 26, 1968, said that "if PMIP seeks to represent the Malays what is wrong in us (meaning the PPP) defending the non-Malays." This was received with tremendous applause from the audience, a majority of whom are non-Malays. The trend of the Party's struggle is thus obvious.

1. Straits Budget: 31/5/1967

1. Straits Times - 20/10/67 - Article by Samad Ismail.

2. Syed Hussein Ali - "Political Myths & Reality" in Opinion Vol. 1. No. 8. March/April 1968.

The emergence of the Gerakan Ra'ayat Malaysia in April, this year, caused quite a stir in the Malaysian politics. What was significant about the new party is the leadership. Two of its leaders are University professors, two are medical practitioners and two laywers. Most of them are prominent citizens, and formerly belonged to different parties, e.g. Dr. Lim Chong Eu formerly of UDP and Dr. Tan Chee Khoo formerly of Labour Party. The Party's progress in drawing public support is still to be seen. As yet no criticisms were made of the party being communal. In fact, it is regarded as a substitute for Alliance. Thus it seems that a politically integrated party has begun to take root in this country. How successful this would be, however, is another question. At the moment it is regarded essentially as an intellectual party!

NO. 10. We have thus seen how communalism in this country is helped, perpetuated by the styles of interest articulation. From the structures of the parties examined and the appeal they have made, we can form another conclusion. Perhaps, Tan Siew Sin, the Minister of Finance and the president of MCA, is quite appropriate when he classifies the country's opposition parties in rather crude, but perhaps, more vivid terms, when he says that, "Opposition parties in the country would be broadly divided into the 'Hate Malay' and 'Hate Chinese' groups they, however, camouflaged their objectives with such terms like 'non-communalism'!¹. His statement serves to illustrate, in rather dramatic terms perhaps, another dominant feature of the Malaysian politics, i.e. The leading part played by the TWO major races of Malays and Chinese in the process of political bargaining, it should not, however, be wrongly emphasised that the other races or communal groups have little political significance. Also, it would be wrong to assume that there is solidarity and unity of approach among the Malays and Chinese themselves. In terms of Party loyalty a significant amount of Malay support is controlled by the PMIP, besides UMNO. Similarly, many Chinese support, for example, the DAP, the PPP besides the MCA. In fact, the list could be extended further, for the various communities. Nevertheless, it would still be valid for general analytical purposes at least, to look at the political process in Malaysia in terms of Malay-Chinese relationships. As R. Catley explains, "Politically, numerically and economically, the Chinese were and are the most significant immigrant group, and it is convenient to analyse communalism in Malaya and Malay/Chinese continuum."². It is true that for Malaysia as a whole, the racial composition is more complex, but this will not necessarily distort the argument radically. It is a recognition of the bargaining strength of the Malays and Chinese that serves as the basis or rationality behind the political coalition, and also its strength, of the Alliance Party. their parties (all of which are essentially non-Malay) do not want a strong Malay representation, knowing the relative strength of PMIP.

1. Straits Budget: 31/5/1967

2. R. Catley: "Malaysia: The Lost Battle for Merger", in the Australian Outlook, Volume 21, Number 1. April, 1967
choice, then the real contest of policy will move altogether from the centre to the periphery, and it will be in the states that a variety of little Indias will be shaped. Such a prospect cannot but excite dismay.

for the problems of India are so huge in magnitude that only a united effort to tackle them can promise any real hope of solution".¹ In

The need for National Political Parties. prospect of the emergence of "little Malaysia" in the states but the nature of the problems also calls

for a 'unit'. Although Malaysia is not a one-party political system, it is also not a parliamentary system where several large parties compete for electoral support and thus legislative control. The inter-communal set-up of the Alliance makes it electorally dominant. In the last election only the Alliance contested every of the 104 seats. The next party which contested most seats was the Socialist Front which fought for 63 seats.

The other parties are:

practically all government policies and practically all legislative and other moves by the government are calculated risks in terms of and with a view to maintaining inter-racial relations. It might be argued that in the Malaysian case, such policies are in fact taken in policies. But the fact remains that the criteria used for policy formation

TABLE 4

NO. OF SEATS CONTESTED BY THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES.

Parties	No. of Seats Contested
PMIP	53
PPP	9
Party Negara	4
EAP (now DAP)	11
UDP	27

*Source: Report on the Parliamentary (Dewan Ra'ayat) and state Legislative Assembly General Elections - 1964 of the States of Malaya - Government Printers.

This means that the other parties are aware of their weakness compared to Alliance, and that they cannot stand to win.

In Parliament and outside it the Alliance is opposed by relatively small groups of organized opposition intermittently conflicting with each other. For instance various attempts were made to form a united opposition to topple Alliance. But the best that was achieved was the electoral pact of the PPP and the DAP, mentioned earlier. The PMIP was never considered in any attempt to form a 'united opposition' as it was regarded by the other opposition parties to be a racial party. It could also be that the other parties (all of which are essentially non-Malay) do not want a strong Malay representation, knowing the relative strength of PMIP.

Of policies in India, Segal makes the prediction that "if democracy does not now take a new course with the creation of parties of policy, so that the mass electorate is given a meaningful national choice, then the real contest of policy will move altogether from the centre to the parts, and it will be in the states that a variety of little Indias will be shaped. Such a prospect cannot but excite dismay,

for the problems of India are so huge in magnitude that only a united effort to tackle them can promise any real hope of solution".¹ In Malaysia, the problem is not so much the prospect of the emergence of "little Malaysia" in the states but the nature of the problems also calls for a 'united' and combined effort by the different races in the country to tackle them. In the effort to establish unity and national integration, substantial ground would have been covered when powerful parties of policy, offering the mass electorate truly national choices could come into being.

As it is, practically all government policies and practically all legislative and other moves by the government are calculated risks in terms of and with a view to harmonious inter-racial relations. It might be argued that in the Malaysian case, such policies are in fact taken in pursuance of the national interest and as such, could qualify as "national" policies. But the fact remains that the criteria used for policy formation are racial considerations as was already discussed.

Zawani, Secretary General of FMIP and Dr. Tan Chee Khoo, Secretary General of Gerakan. All are agreed that national integration is a crucial need in this country. However, the FMIP's concept of national integration is very different from the other three. This will be discussed later. The other three, while their definitions may differ, all are agreed that the aim of national integration in this country is the creation of a sense of Malaysian nationhood. All agreed that the problem is strictly a problem of integration and not assimilation for the simple reason that, according to them, assimilation is impossible in a society where there is no 'minority problem' i.e. a society where, numerically, no one communal group is dominant. Assimilation necessarily requires inter-marriage which, in a multi-religious society, is very difficult. A Muslim will not marry a non-Muslim if he or she has to sacrifice his/her religion. National integration within the context of Malaysia, according to DAP, Gerakan and UMNO or Alliance can be best defined as "the mutual adjustment between the interests of the communities in all fields of behaviour as well as in the fields of thought and emotion. The goal of our national integration is to develop a sense of nationhood, a sense of common destiny and solidarity embracing the entire population of Malaysia."¹ The common goal, however, does not preclude political parties from protruding racial or communal issues into the Malaysian political process as already discussed. This is due to the fact that each communal group is suspicious of the other. One of the functions of national integration then would be to eradicate this mutual suspicion. Here we come again to the problem of the absence of politically integrated political parties as already mentioned. In other words without the emergence of a politically integrated political parties, the process of national integration will be greatly hindered.

The concept of national integration within the context of Malaysia, to the FMIP is somewhat different. The FMIP accepted the concept in principle. But to FMIP national integration is associated with racial harmony. As already pointed out national integration in

in Malaysia 1. R. Segal: "The Crisis of India". Page 256. 1968

Hardmansworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books (1965)

Malaysia means much more and much deeper than racial harmony. The PMIP's concept of national integration is the creation of a MALAY nationhood rather than a MALAYSIAN nationhood. When there is such a stage and when the other races accepted MALAY nationhood, i.e. when there is racial harmony, then there is national integration. The PMIP believed that this country CHAPTER V the MALAYS. As such the nation should be associated with the MALAYS. This nation should be known as the MALAY nation. To the PMIP the MALAYS in this country is not only a race but a nation in itself. CONCLUSION Asri in an article in 'Bulan Bintang', the PMIP's official political organ, pointed out that historically, geographically and politically Malaya was and is a Malay National Integration in Malaysia (West Malaysia). The colonial powers seized this country from the hands of the Malays.....

Geographic The discussions so far has served to illustrate very clearly the need for national integration in this country. The writer held talks with four prominent members of four prominent political parties; Inche Musa Hitam of UMNO, Inche Lim Kit Siong of DAP, Inche Abdullah Zawani, Secretary General of PMIP and Dr. Tan Chee Khoo, Secretary General of Gerakan. All are agreed that national integration is a politically, crucial need in this country. However, the PMIP's concept of national integration is very different from the other three. This will be discussed later. The other three, while their definitions may differ, on all are agreed that the aim of national integration in this country is the creation of a sense of Malaysian nationhood. All agreed that the problem is strictly a problem of integration and not assimilation for the simple reason that, according to them, assimilation is impossible in a society where there is no 'minority problem' i.e. a society where, numerically, no one communal group is dominant. Assimilation necessarily requires inter-marriage which, in a multi-religious society, is very difficult. A Muslim will not marry a non-Muslim if he or she has to sacrifice his/her religion. National integration within the context of Malaysia, according to DAP, Gerakan and UMNO or Alliance can be best defined as "the mutual adjustment between the interests of the communities in all fields of behaviour as well as in the fields of thought and emotion. The goal of our national integration is to develop a sense of nationhood, a sense of common destiny and solidarity embracing the entire population of Malaysia."¹ The common goal, however, does not preclude political parties from protruding racial or communal issues into the Malaysian political process as already discussed. This is due to the fact that each communal group is suspicious of the other. One of the function of national integration then would be to eradicate this mutual suspicion. Here we come again to the problem of the absence of politically integrated political parties as already mentioned. In other words without the emergence of a politically integrated political parties, the process of national integration will be greatly hindered.

The concept of national integration within the context of Malaysia, to the PMIP is somewhat different. The PMIP accepted the concept in principle. But to PMIP national integration is associated with racial harmony. As already pointed out national integration in

1. Syed Hussein Alatas: "The concept of national integration in Malaysia" - in the Opinion, Vol. I, No. 10 - June/July, 1968

Malaysia means much more and much deeper than racial harmony. The PMIP's concept of national integration is the creation of a MALAY nationhood rather than a MALAYSIAN nationhood. When there is such a stage and when the other races accepted MALAY nationhood, i.e. when there is racial harmony, then there is national integration. The PMIP believed that this country belongs to the MALAYS. As such the nation should be associated with the MALAYS. This nation should be known as the MALAY nation. To the PMIP the MALAYS in this country is not only a race but a nation in itself.¹ Dato Mohd. Asri in an article in 'Bulan Bintang', the PMIP's official political organ, pointed out that "historically, geographically and politically Malaya was and is a Malay country."² "Historically this is a Malay country. The colonial powers seized this country from the hands of the Malays..... Geographically, this is a Malay country..... It is not that this country is included in the Malay archipelago? Geographers and geographical maps identified this region as the Malay archipelago long before the British named this peninsula of ours as they Malaya or "British Malaya". This peninsula had been known as "Malay Peninsula"..... It is a fact that this country is, politically, a Malay country. When the Malayan Union was insisted upon, the British asked for the signature of the Malay rulers..... And prior to Malaysia this country even though in English was known as the Federation of Malaya, in the national language it was called 'Persekutuan Tanah Melayu (MALAY)'." To the PMIP therefore, the Malays are not an immigrant race. They are the indigenous people of this land, the sons of the soil, and therefore deserve special privileges distinct and above the "orang dagang" (foreigners). It is to fulfill this belief that the PMIP's struggle is based on. However, the PMIP perhaps do not want to be branded as too racial because it claims not to champion the Malays alone but as its official organ, "Bulan Bintang", says "To fight for the sovereignty and people of Islam."³ In any case, the PMIP still insist that this should be a MALAY nation irregardless whether all the races in this country are converted to Islam or not. Late last year, the PMIP Parliament member from Bachok (Kelantan), Abu Bakar Hamzah, moved a motion in Parliament that this nation should be known and termed as MALAY nation.⁴ In other words the PMIP's policy is one of assimilation. To them, there should be one single-medium of instruction in every school in this country, because multi-lingualism in schools is regarded by PMIP as the greatest barrier towards the achievement of 'integration', or in their context, assimilation.

Processes towards cultural blending are now discernible but successes are still to be noticed. Though there are the staging of various "cultural shows" where participants from various races are invited, this does not indicate any measure of success. The Malay dances and songs are performed and sung by the Malays and the Chinese dances by the Chinese. In other words there is no racial sharing of

1. Bulan Bintang - December 1967.

1. Goh Hock Guan on the concept of National Integration in Malaysia - 2. Bulan Bintang - December 1967/68.

3. Every issue of the 'Bulan Bintang' carries these words on its cover.

4. Utusan Zaman: 27/8/67.

cultures. In the field of music there is a discernible progress whereby Chinese, Indians and Malay music are blended into single songs. The Cultural Unity as Instrument to Integration.¹ Malaysia orchestra.

Assimilation is not possible in this country, according to Inche Musa Hitam, the UMNO executive secretary, as religion poses the strongest obstacles to such an aspiration. It overrides racial feeling. But at the present moment, there is segregation in the fields of sports.

It is recognition of this kind of situation that has led Malaysians to argue that integration is the best alternative. "There Malays must be less Malay in their outlook, the Chinese must be less Chinese and the Indians must be less Indians and so on, so that eventually we shall regard ourselves as Malaysians rather than as Malays, Chinese or Indians, or whatever our racial origin may be....." any attempt towards "deculturation" will be met with hostility from the groups.

But this is also where the root of the problem seems to lie. The leaders of the various ethnic groups seem convinced that unless they act now to protect their ethnic heritage, ultimately either one of the other communal group will emerge to dominate. In practice, every move made for 'cultural unity' will be met by ethnic solidarity. We have seen that Malay as a national language to promote harmony between the races is accepted. "As to Malay being a useful common national language nobody in his right sense will object. As to it being the one and only language, very few people will be happy with this."¹

Musa Hitam is of the view that culture could be an instrument to promote national integration. He suggested Malay culture as the basis of Malaysian culture because according to him, the Malay culture is an evolution of a fusion of Malay, Indian, Arabic, Chinese and other cultures. The Malay wedding ceremony is a modification of the Indian's. Burning fire-crackers during Hari Raya is a culture of the Chinese but now assimilated with Malay practice. This however is not acceptable to the non-Malays. Dr. Tan Chee Khoo said, let the culture develop by itself. Let nobody mention what culture should be the base of the Malaysian culture. The DAP is more vehement in any attempt to meddle with the various ethnic cultures. DAP preaches "cultural democracy in which all the diverse cultural strands in a multi-racial nation are given free and equal play and inter-play, as the best means of achieving a securely based and enduring national integration."²

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1. Goh Hock Guan on the concept of National Integration in Malaysia - Opinion - Vol. I, No. 10, 20/6/1968.

2. Rocket: Vol. 3, No. 6. June 1968. Page 5.

1. At a private interview.

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cultures. In the field of music there is a discernible progress whereby Chinese, Indians and Malay music are blended into single songs. The initiative however, is only taken by the Radio Malaysia orchestra.

A common culture may also come out of the sports field. In this field a greater sense of togetherness, a greater pride of being Malaysians are noted. Malaysians team spirit overrides racial feeling. But at the present moment, there is segregation in the fields of sports. One that is not intentional. The Malays monopolised the sepak-raga game. The Chinese basket-ball, table-tennis, and badminton. If there is multi-racial participation in all the games at the national level, perhaps, according to the Menteri Besar of Selangor, Dato Harun,¹ a higher level of national orientation can be reached. This is a small but hope. But in any case, a common culture needed time to develop, and any attempt towards "deculturation" will be met with hostility from the groups concerned. ing ethnically biased or politically discriminative. As Milne puts it, the problem is to discover potent Malaysian symbols conducive to national unity which are not and which do not appear to be exclusively Malay.¹ As it is now, the many national symbols are Malay in character. The Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, the national anthem or the parliamentary procedures for instance are regarded as "Malayish". The wearing of 'songkok' by sportsmen participating in foreign countries is regarded as an attempt to impose Malay culture. So while letting the free play of other cultures, the Malay culture receives a better patronage. So there is a suspicion among the non-Malays that the claim of unity in diversity by the Alliance is only a lip-service. But in any case, to what extent can diversity be tolerated without having to prejudice national unity. This is the question to which Malaysians have not found a satisfactory answer and the problem to which they have not found a satisfactory solution. It is not a question of having to choose between various degrees of liberalism or various degrees of authoritarianism. In fact, the question of a voluntary blending of cultural differences into a national unity is quite separate from a consideration of the system or type of government that can best bring about national unity. It is the question of mutual adjustment, accommodation or adaptation to cultural differences at the inter-personal level. Diversity would not be questioned if it does not adversely affect the operations and smooth functioning of the political process. The problem is that it does. It is in this sense that pluralism needs to be regulated if national unity is not to be prejudiced.

It would appear then that one of the basic problems of national integration in Malaysia is the difficulty of establishing an integrated political process. One of the most significant aspects of this problem is the difficulty of providing an alternative to the racial basis for political participation. As Lucian W. Pye says, "..... as yet there has not emerged a distinct sphere of political relations that is clearly separated from the more basic patterns of social and personal relations. On the contrary, questions of social status, ethnic identity, and personal associations tend to determine the

1. R.S. Milne: "Government and Politics in Malaysia", in Malaysia, 1. At a private interview.

patterns of political loyalties and behaviour."¹ Defenders of the status quo argue that the political process is not deliberately geared to Summary. In this manner but that economic circumstances have forced it to be so. Indeed, everyone has his own reasons to explain and to account for or justify. The government on its part realises the danger of deculturation/assimilation. In theory, the government subscribes to the practice of toleration and equality for all. In practice, however, the government pursues a policy which could be termed "discriminative toleration". For example, financial incentives and legislative measures are used to encourage the use and teaching of the national language (the Malay language). While the use and teaching of other languages are permitted, they do not share the same patronage. The move to develop the usage of national language, a trans-ethnic pan-territorial language is but one example of the attempts to develop a Malaysian identity. But in these attempts, the government is constantly faced with the problem of having to avoid charges of being ethnically biased or politically discriminative. As Milne puts it, the problem is to discover potent Malaysian symbols conducive to national unity which are not and which do not appear to be exclusively Malay.¹ As it is now, the many national symbols are Malay in character. The Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, the national anthem or the parliamentary procedures for instance are regarded as "Malayish". The wearing of 'songkok' by sportsmen participating in foreign countries is regarded as an attempt to impose Malay culture. So while letting the free play of other cultures, the Malay culture receives a better patronage. So there is a suspicion among the non-Malays that the claim of unity in diversity by the Alliance is only a lip-service. It is a problem of integration, of mutual adaptations of the members. But in any case, to what extent can diversity be tolerated without having to prejudice national unity. This is the question to which Malaysians have not found a satisfactory answer and the problem to which they have not found a satisfactory solution. It is not a question of having to choose between various degrees of liberalism or various degrees of authoritarianism. In fact, the question of a voluntary blending of cultural differences into a national unity is quite separate from a consideration of the system or type of government that can best bring about national unity. It is the question of mutual adjustment, accommodation or adaptation to cultural differences at the inter-personal level. Diversity would not be questioned if it does not adversely affect the operations and smooth functioning of the political process. The problem is that it does. It is in this sense that pluralism needs to be regulated if national unity is not to be prejudiced.

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1. R.S. Milne: "Government and Politics in Malaysia", in Malaysia, Wong Gungwu (ed). Page 331.

patterns of political loyalties and behaviour."¹ Defenders of the status-quo argue that the political process is not deliberately geared to operate in this manner but that economic circumstances have forced it to be so. Indeed, everyone has his own reasons to explain and to account for or justify the situation. But the fact remains that politics of communalism inhibit the articulation of potentially more specific intrests.² And the absence of a "national political process in which all important intrests are clearly articulated and aggregated means that the patterns of domestic political relations cannot perform an integrating function for the future society."³

To a large extent, the problems of political integration in Malaysia arise out of a lack of proper appreciation of the problem itself. This is due, mainly, to the lack of political experience, the absence of a long - established political tradition and insufficient political education. In a sense, it is the problem of getting individual Malaysians to play new roles in a new situation. For example, to certain sections of the Malaysian population the appeals to national unity seems to be request that they accept an unsatisfactory situation. The language Act is a case in point. Perhaps, this might be part of people's normal reluctance to condone changes, especially when change involves persons individually in any reconstruction of their private plans, hopes and expectations.

Manifestly, the integrative problem in Malaysia concerns the easing of tensions between the several communities that make up the multi-racial society. It is a problem of integration, of mutual adaptations of the members of the society. Latently, the problem concerns the development and establishment of a common national conciousness. It is the problem of developing a conciousness of identity among the people, a conciousness not only to BE but also to ACT as Malaysians. In other words, it is the problem of creating the "well-functioning citizen" as Weiner termed it.⁴

National integration would be achieved in Malaysia when the state could, as Professor Deutsch says, count on the "good citizenship"⁵ of every Malaysian i.e. "on their unsupervised compliance in most situations and of their active support in case of need - even though they may have preserved their ethnic, cultural, or linguistic distinctiveness and their reluctance to condone inter-marriage or to engage in close social or personal relations across the boundaries of

1. L.W. Pye: "The politics of South East Asia" in "Politics of Developing Areas" ed. by Coleman and Almond. Page 118.

2. See Chapter IV.

3. L.W. Pye - op. cit. Page 151.

4. M. Weiner. Page 7.

5. K.W. Deutsch: "Nation-Building" - Page 7.
W.J. Foltz (eds.)

their groups."¹ A common political culture could be said to have come into being when Malaysians can feel free and are willing and able to communicate and act together, politically, as one people although their ethnic or other group diversity might remain preserved "as it has been preserved among the Englishmen, Welshmen and Scotsmen that have for centuries made up the British people and the British nation or among the four language groups that have made up the Swiss people and the Swiss nation."²

1. op. cit. Page 7.

Press 2. K.W. Deutsch and W.J. Foltz: "Nation-Building", Atherton
-Bess - N. York. 1963. Page 7.

13. Economist, June 5th, 1965.

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